

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1481

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AF FOR DAS HARROP

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, ET, US
SUBJ: NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1378

1. DURING MY CALL EVENING MARCH 29 ON MOFA AMERICAS DIVISION HEAD BERHANE DERESSE TO DELIVER PROTEST (SEPTTEL), HE BROUGHT UP SUBJECT OF PERMSEC DAWIT'S CONVERSATION ON MARCH 15 WITH AMBASSADOR BERGUS IN KHARTOUM. HE HAD REPORTED OUR CONVERSATION OF MARCH 25 TO DAWIT AND GOT OUT OF HIM COMMENT THAT HE HAD TOLD BERGUS ONLY THAT THERE WAS "NO PROBLEM IN PRINCIPLE," THAT DELAY WAS BECAUSE OF NORMAL BUREAUCRATIC PROCESSES, AND THAT AGREEMENT SHOULD BE FORTHCOMING. I DOUBT VERY MUCH THAT DAWIT HANDLED SUBJECT THAT WAY WITH BERGUS, BUT IT IS CERTAINLY MOFA POSITION NOW.

2. BERHANE FURTHER SAID THAT HE HAD NOT FORGOTTEN HIS PROPOSAL THAT FOREIGN MINISTER FELLEKE MEET WITH ME TO DISCUSS PROBLEM. HOWEVER, FOREIGN MINISTER CONTINUES TO
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BE TIED UP WITH VISITING MISSIONS, SUCH AS KENYAN FOREIGN MINISTER WAIYAKI'S, HE COMMENTED, AND OUR MEETING CANNOT BE SCHEDULED YET.

3. IT MAKES EIGHT WEEKS TODAY THAT I PRESENTED NOTE REQUESTING AGREEMENT TO CHIEF OF PROTOCOL. THIS IS, AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, NOT AN INORDINATELY LONG DELAY BY

RECENT STANDARDS. (MAC GODLEY'S HOWEVER, ORIGINALLY
TOOK ONLY TWO WEEKS.) HOWEVER, IT IS EQUALLY CLEAR THAT
EPMG COULD HANDLE BUREAUCRATIC PROCESS OF AGREEMENT OVER-
NIGHT IF IT REALLY ATTACHED TOP PRIORITY TO SIGNALLING
DESIRE FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS BY RECEIVING U.S. AMBASSA-
DOR. RATHER, IT SEEMS TO US AT EMBASSY THAT EPMG DESIRES
TO TIME GRANTING AGREEMENT TO SUIT ITS OWN OBJECTIVES.
THESE COULD RANGE FROM ANYTHING SUCH AS DESIRE TO TWIST
SOVIET BEAR'S TAIL ON A GIVEN DAY TO BARGAINING FOR U.S.
SUPPORT ON ERITREA OR A DECISION NOT TO SUPPLY DEFENSIVE
MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO SOMALIA. I REALIZE THIS ALL
SOUNDS PRETTY MACHIAVELLIAN, BUT SUCH IS THE AMBIENCE WE
LIVE IN. AND EPMG HAS RECORD OF TIMING VIRTUALLY EVERY
ACTION, E.G., INVITATION TO WESTERN JOURNALISTS, TO ITS
OWN ENDS. A MORE BENIGN ANALYSIS, IS THAT ETHIOPIANS
WANT TO GRANT BUNCH OF AGREEMENTS TOGETHER (MEXICAN IS
PENDING, AND PROBABLY FRENCH, BUT WE KNOW OF NO RPT NO
SOCIALIST REQUESTS) IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE
BALANCE.
MATHERON

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